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Saint Basil Academy Celebrates 80 Years of Operation



This past Saturday, June 22, was full of many joyful milestones. It was the fifth anniversary of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America's enthronement as well as the enthronement of Metropolitan Constantine of Denver. It was also the 77th Annual Commencement Exercises and the 80th Anniversary of Saint Basil Academy. Nearly 200 people gathered at the beautiful Saint Basil campus in Garrison, New York to celebrate the accomplishments of Saint Basil's resident children and young adults.

Saint Basil Academy currently has 27 children in its residential programs, four of which were graduates honored on Saturday. It was a joyful day full of moving speeches, piano and Byzantine chant performances by the children, an awards ceremony, an art exhibit and more. Saint Basil Academy Board of Trustees Secretary, Despina Koulianos, served as the mistress of ceremonies, and Father Michael Palamara of Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in West Nyack, New York offered the opening invocation. Eleni Constantinides delivered the National Philoptochos address, and Dr. Steven Gounardes, the President of Saint Basil's Board of Trustees and Father Constantine Sitaras, the Executive Director of Saint Basil Academy, addressed the graduates. Saint Basil alum and award winning TV broadcaster and media executive Manny Fantis delivered an unforgettable keynote address recalling from the heart how formative Saint Basil was for him in

his personal, professional, and spiritual development. Manny got a standing ovation as everyone in attendance was extremely moved and touched.

Graduating seniors, Penelope and Miley, along with middle school graduate, Marianna, delivered wonderful speeches as well. Graduating preschooler, Julia, led everyone in the pledge of allegiance not only in recitation but also in sign language accompanied by one of her classmates.The graduates along with the other children of Saint Basil received incredibly thoughtful and generous gifts from the National Philoptochos, many individual Philoptochos chapters, District 6 Daughters of Penelope, Maids of Athena, and AHEPA, and donors and friends of Saint Basil from across the nation. The ceremony was followed by a delicious meal generously donated by Pan Gregorian Enterprises and an open house in the AHEPA Education building with a resident art exhibit and a special boutique run by Saint Basil children, family, and staff. It was a day full of love, fellowship, and celebration. Thank you to everyone, both near and far, who helped make it happen!

Photo courtesy of Saint Basil Academy.

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